



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Supervisor Deanna Alexander, 18th District

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Hasty Action by Supervisors Pushes Valuable Leader Out the Door

MILWAUKEE – Hector Colon, the Director of Milwaukee County's Department of Health and Human Services, announced Monday that he would be leaving Milwaukee County to take a job as the president and CEO of the highly regarded Lutheran Social Services.

Supervisor Deanna Alexander released the following statement:

"The Milwaukee County Board's poorly considered action to drown county employees in uncertainty has already caused the County to lose one of its most valuable and effective managers.

"Despite being warned that cutting the pay of department heads and other senior staff would result in the loss of key employees and make it difficult to attract and retain the most qualified applicants, the Board charged ahead with an ill-conceived action and we are now seeing the consequences of that decision.

"The Board was not even interested in reviewing salary levels in relation to duties and market rates, they just slashed. Just because the board has the power to cut salaries, does not mean it should, especially abruptly and with no notice to employees.

"Having been confirmed for another two year term - redoubling his commitment to Milwaukee County just a few months ago - there is no doubt in my mind that the Board's hasty action to slash his salary contributed to Hector Colon's decision to leave."

"Hector has had tremendous success at the helm of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and his six years of leadership made him invaluable as we continue to modernize our services for the people of Milwaukee County. It should be no surprise that Hector was able to find another executive level position continuing in Wisconsin public service so easily. Based on statements from Lutheran Social Services, it is clear that they feel they hit the jackpot. How can it be that Milwaukee County's board so easily let go someone so hotly pursued by the boards of other major Wisconsin employers? It is a tremendous shame!

"Director Colon is highly respected by the employees who serve under him and he has successfully tackled some of the biggest challenges facing the county. The loss of his leadership is a real blow to the county and sets us back in our efforts to reform mental health and take on other vexing challenges like the problem of homelessness.

"Now that the salary for the DHHS director has been slashed by nearly 1/3, and the county has a reputation for slashing salaries arbitrarily, it will be a miracle if we can find someone to take on this role and actually bring about the successes that Milwaukee County needs.

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